## AMENDMENT TO THE TITLE

**Please amend the title to read as follows:**

DEVICE AND METHOD FOR LAYING RIGID TUBULAR PIPES

## AMENDMENT(S) TO THE SPECIFICATION

**Please add a paragraph beginning at page 1, line 2:**

## CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application is a 35 U.S.C. §§ 371 national phase conversion of PCT/FR2005/000050, filed 10 January 2005, which claims priority of French Application No. 0400757, filed 27 January 2004. The PCT International Application was published in the French language.

**Please insert the following section heading at page 1, line 3:**

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

To this end, according to a first subject, the present invention proposes a device for laying rigid tubular pipes from a working platform of a laying vessel. The[[,]] ~~the said~~ pipes, which are designed to convey a fluid within, ~~being~~ are laid by successively, connecting at the said working platform pipe sections which are oriented in a direction between an inclined direction and a vertical direction. The ~~said~~ device comprises lower retaining means designed to retain a pipe and lower securing means designed to support the ~~said~~ retaining means at the ~~said~~ platform, upper retaining means ~~being~~ designed to retain the ~~said~~ pipe and being able to move translationally with respect to the ~~said~~ lower retaining means. The ~~said~~ retaining means are designed to retain the ~~said~~ pipe from the inside, and the ~~said~~ device additionally comprises upper securing means to which the ~~said~~ lower retaining means can be coupled through a pipe section to be connected, in such a way as to release the ~~said~~ lower

securing means and to be able to secure thereto the ~~said~~ upper retaining means after the ~~said~~ section to be connected has been connected and submerged.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 26, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

According to a particularly advantageous embodiment of the invention, the ~~said~~ retaining means include a locking sleeve prolonged by a cleat[[,]]. The ~~the said~~ locking sleeve ~~being~~ is designed to be activated so as to expand inside the pipeline in order to be locked therein either by friction or by indentation. Consequently, this sleeve is prevented from translational movement in the pipe, which can then be retained by a cleat situated outside the pipe or outside the pipe section.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 34, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

Advantageously, the ~~said~~ lower retaining means are provided with a ~~centring~~ centering sleeve mounted between the ~~said~~ locking sleeve and the ~~said~~ cleat. The centering~~, the said centring~~ sleeve ~~being~~ is designed to extend between the ~~said~~ pipe and a pipe section to be connected. Consequently, whereas the locking sleeve retains the pipe, the ~~centring~~ centering sleeve is for its part designed to be fitted partly into the pipe and to project therefrom so that the pipe section to be connected can be fitted thereon, which pipe section may then be welded to the pipe.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

According to a particularly advantageous characteristic of the invention, the ~~said~~ lower retaining means are coupled to the ~~said~~ upper securing means by first means forming a sling. Consequently, it is relatively easy to insert these first sling-forming means into the pipe section since they are relatively thin and flexible and, nevertheless, they are designed to withstand high tensile stresses, particularly in order to retain the pipe, as will be described in the remainder of the description.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

Preferably, the ~~said~~ upper retaining means are designed to be traversed freely by the ~~said~~ first sling-forming means, which makes it possible for the pipe and the pipe section to be connected to be held independently of one another before they are connected.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

The ~~said~~ upper securing means advantageously comprise first means for translationally driving the ~~said~~ first sling-forming means, so as to be able to submerge the connected pipe section while retaining the ~~said~~ pipe, until the upper retaining means are secured to the ~~said~~ lower securing means.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 26, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

Particularly advantageously, the ~~said~~ upper retaining means are mounted on second means forming a sling, the ~~said~~ second sling-forming means being driven translationally by second drive means mounted on the ~~said~~ securing means, so as to be able to translationally drive the pipe section to be connected and to fit it onto the pipe in order to couple it thereto.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 32, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

According to a second subject, the present invention proposes a method of laying tubular pipes by using the laying device as described above.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 35, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

According to a particular embodiment, the ~~said~~ method comprises the steps below in the following order: a) the ~~said~~ lower retaining means, which are fastened to a pipe, are secured to the ~~said~~ lower securing means; then b) the ~~said~~ lower retaining means are coupled to the ~~said~~ upper securing means through a pipe section to be connected, in such a way as to release the ~~said~~ lower securing means and to connect the ~~said~~ section and the ~~said~~ pipe; and c) the ~~said~~ upper retaining means are secured to the ~~said~~ lower securing means after the ~~said~~ connected section has been submerged.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Other particular features and advantages of the invention will emerge on reading the description presented below of a specific embodiment of the invention, given by way of illustration but with no limitation being implied, with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

[[-]] Figure 1 is a schematic front view of a laying device according to the invention;

[[-]] Figure 2 is a schematic detail view in vertical section of the laying device illustrated in Figure 1, in a first step of the method;

[[-]] Figure 3 is a schematic detail view of the laying device in a second step of the method;

[[-]] Figure 4 is a schematic detail view illustrating the laying device during a third step of the method, the connection step;

[[-]] Figure 5 is a schematic detail view illustrating the device during a fourth step of the method, corresponding to submersion;

[[-]] Figure 6 is a schematic detail view in a fifth step of the method;

[[-]] Figure 7 is a schematic detail view illustrating the laying device in a sixth step of the method; and

[[-]] Figure 8 is a schematic detail view illustrating the laying device in a final step before returning to the first step.

**Please insert the following section heading at page 5, line 1:**

**DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

In Figure 3, the weight of the pipe 18 is taken up by the first sling 34. It is thus possible to move away the lower securing means. Subsequently, the ~~centring~~ centering sleeve 37 is inserted at the end of the pipe section 16 [[18]]. The section 16 is then lowered and welded to the pipe 18. Non-destructive tests may then be carried out and the desired covering is applied at the junction between the pipe 18 and the section 16.

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:**

In Figure 6, after the sling 34 has stopped being driven, the upper retaining means 36 are engaged in the lower securing means 20 in such a way as to transfer the load of the pipe 18 from the upper ~~securing~~ retaining means to these lower securing means 20. Thus, the locking sleeve 26 of the lower retaining means 24 is deactivated so that, by driving the sling 34, it can be lifted back up, together with the ~~centring~~ centering sleeve 40, into the vicinity of the working platform 19, in the end of the pipe 18. Figure 7 illustrates the lower retaining means lifted back up.